



## AFFORDABLE CARE ACT MASSACHUSETTS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE

July 28, 2011

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These Updates, published by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) in consultation with the other state agencies involved in ACA implementation, will bring you news related to the implementation of provisions of the ACA here in Massachusetts.

### Grants and Demonstrations

The ACA provides funding opportunities to transform how health care is delivered, expand access to care and support healthcare workforce training.

#### Grant Activity

**7/22/11** DPH submitted an application under §4002 of the ACA to the **Prevention and Public Health Fund Coordinated Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Program** to strengthen and better coordinate activities within the state aimed at preventing chronic diseases and promoting health. This initiative targets the five leading chronic disease-related causes of death and disability: heart disease, cancer, stroke, diabetes, and arthritis. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects to award approximately \$40 million for three-year programs in all 58 states and territories.

The grant narrative can be read on our website under the Grants and Demonstrations section at: [Grant Narrative](#)

**7/21/11** DPH submitted an application to the Health Resources and Service Administration (HRSA) for a non-competitive supplement under §2951 of the ACA to the **Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program** formula grant funding that allows states to conduct a needs analysis for home visiting programs. Funds will strengthen and improve comprehensive family services; improve coordination of statewide home visiting services for at-risk communities; and improve outcomes for families who reside in at-risk communities. HRSA expects to grant 56 awards from a total of \$125 million.

The grant narrative can be read on our website under the Grants and Demonstrations section at: [Grant Narrative](#)

## News

**7/22/11** HHS/The Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) **approved waivers for the states of Iowa and Kentucky, allowing insurers in those states to phase in the ACA's medical loss ratio (MLR) requirements.** HHS announced they had issued their first MLR state waiver denial to North Dakota. The ACA allows the Secretary to adjust the medical loss ratio (MLR) standard for a state if it is determined that meeting the 80% MLR standard may destabilize the individual insurance market. In order to qualify for this adjustment, a state must demonstrate that requiring insurers in its individual market to meet the 80% MLR has a likelihood of destabilizing the individual market and result in fewer choices for consumers.

North Dakota was seeking a gradual three-year phase in to the 80% requirement but HHS noted that the state's application did not provide evidence that the individual insurance market could become destabilized without a waiver. HHS also noted that although the state's MLR standard is currently 55%, the three largest insurers in the state's individual market are already meeting or nearing the 80% threshold. HHS gave partial approvals to Iowa's and Kentucky's MLR waiver applications; both states were seeking a gradual phase-in to 2014, but HHS gave them a shorter time frame for meeting the 80% requirement. Kentucky must meet 75% this year and 80% in 2012, while Iowa must meet 67% this year, 75% in 2012 and 80% in 2013.

HHS has now approved waivers for 5 states. In March the state of Maine was granted the first state-specific adjustment to the MLR rules, allowing its insurers to spend 65% on medical care. For more information on states and the MLR requirements visit the Center for Consumer Information and Insurance Oversight (CCIIO) website at: [CCIIO Website](#)

**7/21/11** Krista Drobac, **a former CMS senior advisor, has been named director of the National Governors Association's** Center for Best Practices Health Division. In her new role she will research health issues and work with states to implement best practices on health care issues, including health insurance, Medicaid, health IT and public health programs. Before she was at CMS, Drobac was deputy director of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and spent five years in the U.S. Senate as a health advisor.

**7/20/11** Created under §6301 of the ACA, **the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute, or PCORI, is currently accepting feedback on its working definition of 'Patient-Centered Outcomes Research.'** PCORI is an independent nonprofit tasked with conducting patient-centered outcomes research and the Institute is asking the public to help define that term. PCORI was created to conduct research to provide information about the best available evidence to help patients and their health care providers make more informed decisions. PCORI's research is intended to give patients a better understanding of the prevention, treatment and care options available, and the science that supports those options. Comments are due on September 2, 2011. PCORI will update its definition based on public feedback from individuals and organizations.

For more information and to submit feedback, visit: <http://www.pcori.org/provide-input/past-opportunities-to-provide-input/>

## EOHHS News

**7/21/11** EOHHS held a **Consumer Focused meeting on the MassHealth Demonstration to Integrate Medicare and Medicaid for Dual Eligible Individuals.** At the meeting the EOHHS team provided project updates and led a discussion with stakeholders about consumer outreach, including member focus groups and state agency consumer meetings, and a quality management framework.

View the meeting materials at: [Meeting Materials](#)

## Upcoming Events

Open Meeting

### **Integrating Medicare and Medicaid for Dual Eligible Individuals**

August 31, 2011, 10 am- 12pm

Saxe Room, Worcester Public Library

Worcester, MA

Consumer Focused Meeting

### **Integrating Medicare and Medicaid for Dual Eligible Individuals**

September 22, 2011, 1pm - 3pm

1 Ashburton Place, 11th Floor, Matta Conference Room

Boston, MA

Bookmark the **Massachusetts National Health Care Reform website**

at: [www.mass.gov/nationalhealthreform](http://www.mass.gov/nationalhealthreform) to read updates on ACA implementation in Massachusetts.

Remember to check <http://mass.gov/duals> for information on the "**Integrating Medicare and Medicaid for Dual Eligible Individuals**" initiative.